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Families before Felons

A safety alert from your state representative

Representative
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Rep. DeBolt has worked with Mark Lunsford to pass Jessica's Law, a measure that would increase penalties for violent sex offenders in Washington. Lunsford's daughter was raped and murdered by a sex offender in 2005.

Families before Felons

A safety alert from your state representative

In February, 83 offenders under the authority of the Department of Corrections were released before serving their sentences. Among them were felons who had committed violent crimes, including a Level III sex offender.

DOC reported that it was unable to find adequate jail space and had no choice but to let these offenders walk free. This is unacceptable management by the corrections agency, which operates under the governor's authority. The unscheduled release of 83 offenders is just the latest in a string of failures by DOC. We want to end the practice of releasing offenders early without adequate community supervision.

House Republicans have introduced the Families Before Felons bill (HB 2393).

Our proposal would:

- Require offenders to sign a contract agreeing to submit to random searches as a condition of early release.
- Require DOC to develop a plan and step up supervision of offenders upon release.
- Require offenders who violate the conditions of their release to go back to prison for the remainder of their original sentence.

Families before Felons

The price of doing nothing



Here are just some of the stories from families who have paid the ultimate price for the department's mismanagement and failure to keep tabs on offenders.

- Last December, King County Sheriff's Deputy Steve Cox was gunned down by Raymond Porter, a known gang member and drug dealer. Porter had committed repeated parole violations with only minor consequences.
- Last November, Seattle Police Officer Beth Nowak was killed in a car crash when Neal Kelley ran a red light in a stolen car. Kelley was a 20-time felon who violated the terms of his parole six times but was not sent back to prison.
- Mary Jane Rivas was high on cocaine when she caused a violent wreck last year, killing Seattle Police officer Joselito Barber. Rivas had been out of prison just 10 days and had never reported in to DOC.

Sadly, these are only some of the tragic stories resulting from the inadequate supervision of felons. We cannot allow another legislative session to pass without addressing this issue. For more information on House Republicans' Families Before Felons legislation, visit our website at www.houserepublicans.wa.gov.



Rep. DeBolt speaks at a Family Before Felons rally.